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AN
ORATION,
PRONOUNCED
JULY 4th, 1792, AT THE REQUEST
OF THE
INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF BOSTON,
IN COMMEMORATION
OF THE
ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

By Joseph Blake, jun. K

"HÆC OLIM MEMINISSE JUVABIT."

PRINTED BY
BENJAMIN RUSSELL, IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

MDCCXCII.

*At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town
of BOSTON, duly qualified and legally warned, in publick Town-
Meeting, assembled at FANEUIL HALL, on Wednesday the 4th of
July, A. D. 1792.*

VOTED,

THAT the SELECTMEN be and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on Mr. JOSEPH BLAKE, jun. and in the name of the Town to thank him for the spirited and elegant ORATION, this Day delivered by him, at the request of the Town, upon the ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—in which, according to the Institution of the Town, he considered the feelings, manners, and principles which led to that Great National Event—and to request of him a Copy thereof for the Press.

Attest,

WILLIAM COOPER, Town-Clerk.

GENTLEMEN,

*ASSURED that readers the most capable of criticism, will
be the most disposed to liberality, in compliance with your request, a
Copy of the ORATION, pronounced the 4th inst. for the Press, is
submitted by, Gentlemen,*

With the utmost respect,

Your very humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

July 9, 1792.



AN
ORATION.

AMERICANS!

THIS morning recalls the moment which inspired our country with a new existence.—The moment when thus inspired, she rose triumphant to the empire of herself!

OPPRESSION was the assistant, not the sole cause of this glorious event. So early as 1688* shot through the island of *Britain* a beam of light which first opened the way to Revolutions. Crossing the Atlantick it afterwards diffused within these Colonies that fervid *spirit* which alone must have dissolved their connection. With an anxious eye she watched its secret progress. Her expedients to extinguish, tended however directly to inkindle it. She attempted to invelope their mind in ignorance, but the ray of intelligence shone upon it with brighter effulgence.—

She

NOTE

* About this time revolution principles began to be disseminated in England.

She loaded them with taxes, arbitrarily withholding the right of representation : It served only to exhibit her oppression in more vivid colours. Thus irritated, the spark first began to glimmer within the province of *New-York*.^{*} At subsequent periods, for nearly 80 years, new pressures had been as new combustibles.— At length it grew into a flame—expanded, spread, glowed, throughout the Continent !

Her arbitrary statutes no longer alarming to the ear, she displayed upon our defenceless shore the more terrific engines of war.

In 1770, within this peaceful town, she opened the first sanguinary scene. But I recal not the fifth of *March*, and nineteenth of *April*—too often already has the eye reviewed them in tears.

That *Britain* first unsheathed the sword, while the memory shall recollect the tongue dare not deny.— That we exhibited patience under oppression, her own Statesmen acknowledged. † Her CHATHAM and CAMDEN with anxiety observed her measures. With all

NOTES.

* In the year 1697 passed in the Assembly of *New-York* the first Act declaratory of our rights.

† Vide Debates in the House of Lords, 1775.

all the charms of eloquence they plead in our behalf. But at that infatuated moment *Eloquence* had lost her charms. The feeble voice of petition could not ascend the summit of her imperious throne. Thus situated, in 1776 Congress pronounced the Declaration of Independence.

Our pen, like the thunderbolt, in an instant shook her court. From its language was the convinced that within the American vein thrilled a spirit too ardent for her controul. A spirit which would burst the firmest walls of imprisonment.

Most affecting, however, was the situation of our country. Although separated by an immense ocean she had been incorporated with *Britain* as with a parent. Like the helpless babe she had clung around her, with all the warmth of affection. In the tone of real anguish she had listed her grievances:—But in vain. The tender ties of consanguinity *Britain* had disregarded. Her filial duty repaid with parental austerity. Her intreaties for relief goaded with fresh tortures. Reclining in innocent security upon her bosom, she had attempted most *unnaturally* to terminate her existence!

UNAVOIDABLE although painful then was resistance.

ance. She at length conquered her affections. Rose
superiour to the common awe of *British* omnipo-
rence. With ardour sprang to the standard of war!

THERE is an enthusiasm sometimes inkindled with-
in the bosom by unprovoked oppression which rises
above every idea of impossibility. It was *this*
which although in the cradle, gave our country the
spring of manhood. *This* which diminished to a
point the most mountainous difficulty. *This* which
bore her in triumph above every obstacle.

By unity in exertion we repaired deficiency in re-
source. Despair at times darkened the prospect but
all the sinews of the country collected into one arm,
and this arm invigorated and strengthened by the
friendly assistance of *France*, *Britain* at length yeild-
ed us the palm.

EACH year have fresh garlands been offered to deco-
rate the brow of those splendid characters who by u-
niting wisdom in the cabinet with bravery in the
field—thus secured to us this *palm*. The task I de-
cline, but while the heart shall recollect, forever will
it yield them the voluntary tribute of gratitude.

NATIONS, like individuals, from turbulence natu-
rally settle into quietude. To the loud thunders of
war

war succeeded the mild whispers of peace. Amidst this calm several years rolled imperceptibly away.— The mind at length rising from sleep, observed in our possession the trophy for which we had waded through fields of blood. Our government appearing inadequate to its preservation, we again rose with unanimity to strengthen and improve it.

THAT awful reverence for ancient institutions which too often checks innovation, did not blind our eye—Imperfection pervading each atom of humanity, we dared to trace its impression within our old system.

OTHER circumstances conspired to extend this boldness of thought. It was natural that a change in situation should require a change in government.— An enlargement of objects in the one, an enlargement of powers in the other.

THUS rose into existence our *Federal Constitution*.

THE comparison of this new fabrick with others of ancient and modern architecture, so fashionable on those occasions—I forbear.

EXPERIMENT can only prove the perfection of political institutions. Already has this proved our highest

est joy that which, in theory, was by some contemplated as our ruin. While those too, who so wisely constructed it, now administer its laws, we may continue to cherish hopes without fears.

THE *sword* which has secured the freedom of a world, now wears engraven upon its scabbard their universal gratitude.

DAZZLING to the eye may have been the starry throne of an *Alexander*, splendid the triumphal car of a *Cesar*, but more grateful to a *Washington*, that throne which will never tarnish within the memory of man!

CIRCUMSTANCES both natural and political will conspire to the longevity of our government.

MOST favourable is the situation of this continent. It stands a world by itself. Barricaded from external danger on one side by vast regions of soil. On the other by wide plains of ocean. The Atlantick upon her bosom may undulate riches to its shore, but all the artillery in Europe cannot shake it to its centre.

INNUMERABLE rivers like veins and arteries circulate life and health throughout the States. The broad bay of *Chesapeake*, the majestick *Hudson* and *Delaware*,
rolling

rolling into various channels this vital fluid, fertilize while they bind the different regions in perpetual intimacy.

NOR less important our political advantages.—Within its circuitous arm our system already embraces fifteen independent states. To each extending alike all the rights which dignify a nation. That right, so dear to Republicans, the FREEDOM OF THE PRESS—that wise institution of humanity, the TRIAL BY JURY—above all, that blessing so long sought for but in vain, EQUAL LIBERTY.

AFTER all upon ourselves will depend the prosperity of our nation.

CLOUDS may gather round this bright prospect, and like the tempest upon the clear face of the Heavens, in an instant wrapt it in darkness.

By our conduct however we may retard, perhaps forever prevent, this gloomy catastrophe.

RUINS of empires have generally appeared within the dreary regions of ignorance and barbarity. Like some solitary tree within the wilderness, far distant from the hand of culture, they have denied their fruit or fallen lifeless to the ground.

SCIENCE

*SCIENCE and the ARTS, like rivulets will revive their expiring fibres, push to maturity their fruit, prevent their sudden decay.

NATIONAL competency can flow only from national frugality. It is not the depth but the prudent management of resources which can insure wealth to a nation. Within each acre of our soil might spring a mine of *Peru*, but prodigality might drain it of its treasures. This prodigality once indulged, we instantly abandon the path of innocence, slide headlong down the precipice of luxury, perish in the torrent below.

BUT of all injunctions no one can be so important as the necessity of a strict attention to our elections. More important under our present than under our former government. Within the sovereignty of the Union will exist a natural prosperity to absorb by degrees the sovereignty of the states. An unrelaxed vigilance may perhaps prevent this almost imperceptable encroachment, but a careless security accelerating the evil, our rights one after another, like drops

NOTE.

* One chief advantage from the introduction and progress of the Arts, was the introduction and progress of Freedom. *Hume's History of England, Vol. 3. 251.*

drops around the attractive margin of a vortex, will be drawn in and buried forever.

SECURE as may be our situation still may the whispers of jealousy assail the ear. In all communities some few amongst the many will murmur without cause, criminate without offence, but from such complaints men of discernment will draw no inferences unfavourable to government.

OUR military establishment upon the western frontiers has fed *profusely* this jealous disposition.—Sensibility has censured in language the most approbious—but reason vindicates with fairness the justice of our cause.

OUR right in the soil *now* in contention has been established both by grant and by occupancy. This right we have transferred and guaranteed to others. Our friends in possession upon the banks of Ohio and in other settlements have been hourly harrassed.—The wilderness has been incrimsoned with their blood. To prevent the further effusion, to relieve the distant voice of distress, repeated have been our treaties. But treaties with the Indian are ineffectual. He will propose with fairness, but the same instant violate them with effrontry. Thus impelled

ed, we have reluctantly drawn the sword from its scabbard. We have waged a war justifiable by the law of nations, still more powerfully by that of nature. A war for the establishment of personal security with undisturbed peace.

You will pardon this deviation from the path assigned me. I have wished only to divert the slanderous arrow from the fair bosom of authority. An arrow which would not at this time have sped with so much venom from its bow, but for the late fall of our friends. In which fall, we have all, with PHILENIA, shed the tear of friendship :

“ NOT crimson War, nor Valour’s glitt’ring wreath,
 “ To the pale Corse restores the quivering breath ;
 “ ’Tis the mild power of seraph Peace alone
 “ Can charm each grief, and every wrong atone ;
 “ Her healing hand shall waft oblivion round,
 “ And pour her opiates through each gushing wound ;
 “ O’er the cold ghost her mantling Olive spread,
 “ And shade the sod that laps the glorious dead.”

FAR is it from my intention to close entirely the watchful eye of jealousy. I only urge a generous confidence in government as most productive of publick peace, at the same time not dangerous to publick security.

I NEED

I NEED not, however, start fears which cannot of themselves exist within this enlightened community. We elect with caution, but once elected we dare think our rulers honest. They are a part of ourselves—in the abuse of *our* rights they equally abuse *their* own. As naturally then might an individual wish to deluge the bark, when the very billow which bears it, must instantly bury himself in the same grave with his companions.

THIS confidence so necessary to the harmony of government will in this country, I trust, exist in its proper latitude. It certainly will so long as wisdom shall continue the pole-star in our elections.

As the guardian of our rights within this state, annually have we chosen the man, who in the cause of his country has nobly scorned the mandate of power, the sceptre of tyranny. Could the luxuries of health *now* unite with the honours of a grateful country, bright to himself would be the evening of his life—as to us have been his meridian services.

AMERICANS!

THUS glorious our Revolution!—*Royalty* has reared

ed an altar, upon which reason had been the sacrifice—the rights of man the incense. This æra has dispelled the film from the eye of nations. Although first rising within this western hemisphere, like the *Aurora Borealis*, it has instantly flashed throughout the political concave. It has melted the diadem from the imperial blow. Tumbled from its deep footsteps the huge Colossus of tyranny. In time will annihilate the massy chain which has so long separated nations!

THIS noble discovery we justly claim as our own. * Nations yet unborn will with gratitude revere the exertions which gave it birth. Even now are they richly repaid by our present prospects.

UNDER the direction of a HAMILTON our credit rising abroad,† has at home already opened all the springs of wealth. At a period not far remote, the tide which has hitherto set so rapidly to foreign shores will

NOTES.

* Those men deserve the gratitude of ages who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense.
DRAGONETTI.

† In THE CENTINEL of 18th April, it appeared several loans had been effected in *Amsterdam* and *Antwerp*, for the *United States*, some of which at the rate of 4 per cent.

will return, and with the fertility of the *Nile*, enliven and enrich our own.

LIKE the subtle fluid has our *commercial spirit* penetrated the most secret avenue of trade. Waves the most distant swell with pride beneath our ships ! Wind: in climes the most foreign with joy unfurl our flag !

EXTENSIVE as has been this intercourse with nations, thank Heaven, we yet retain our native purity. Our exchange has been that of commodities, not of morals. In the contrast of character we ever have, I hope, ever shall, with undaunted pride, support our own.

THIS *vivid spirit* for a period in deep sleep, begins now to wake to its usual activity. The bubble of *speculation* so long sustained in air by the mere breath of infatuation has at length burst. Fatal to individuals may have been its explosion—copious may have been the tears of humanity ;—but misfortunes are sometimes lessons—mankind will in future stand aloof or approach it with caution.

EVERY branch of business will again revive and
industry

industry wear upon her brow new smiles of cheerfulness.

ALREADY have bridges vast and magnificent, drawn into close embrace distant fields of fertility with flourishing towns of commerce. Future improvements of equal utility will succeed to wild pursuits—and arts agricultural, manufactural, mechanical, sedulously employ the mind.

CONVULSION abroad will croud with emigrants our peaceful shores, nor will they ever desert them for the frozen regions of *Canada* and *Nova-Scotia*.

THUS restrained from further emigration by the insurmountable barriers of nature, soon will the hand of culture brighten every feature in the broad face of this continent. Soon will the darkest forest become a crouded town! The most desert field a lap for harvest! The most distant lake a bosom for navigation!

AMERICANS!

How vast the future magnitude of this rising empire! Nations afar will behold it with wonder—like the branches of a mighty family, its inhabitants widely dispersed yet closely united by the invisible tie of consanguinity. Uninterrupted in its situation, its government, its laws, its liberty.!!!



